American Rescue Plan Act Broadband Access Grants

FY 2022 Broadband Expansion Grant Webinar

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Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
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Wisconsin Broadband Office

PSC of WISCONSIN

Today's Agenda

- Program Overview
- Eligibility (who, where)
- Application Content, with Scoring Overview
- Budget and Income Summary
- Submitting Your Application on ERF

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Gov. Evers Announces $100 Million Investment in First Round of Federal Funding for Broadband Access

- Application materials issued on June 1, 2021
- Applications due on July 27, 2021
- Funds coming from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)
- This legislation allocated funds to aid the state in its response to the COVID-19 emergency. Governor Tony Evers has determined to make $100 million of this funding available for improvements in broadband infrastructure
  - "…make necessary investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure."
  - U.S. Department of Treasury Interim Final Rule

Schedule of Events

Date	Milestone
July 13, 2021, 4PM CT	Last day for submitting questions and requests for clarification
July 26, 2021, 4PM CT	Last day to request uploading assistance
July 27, 2021, 4PM CT	Applications due from applicants (deadline for uploading to ERF). Applications are public.
August 20, 2021, 4PM CT	Last day for submitting an objection to a grant application
August 27, 2021, 4PM CT	Last day for submitting a response to an objection

Eligibility

Eligibility

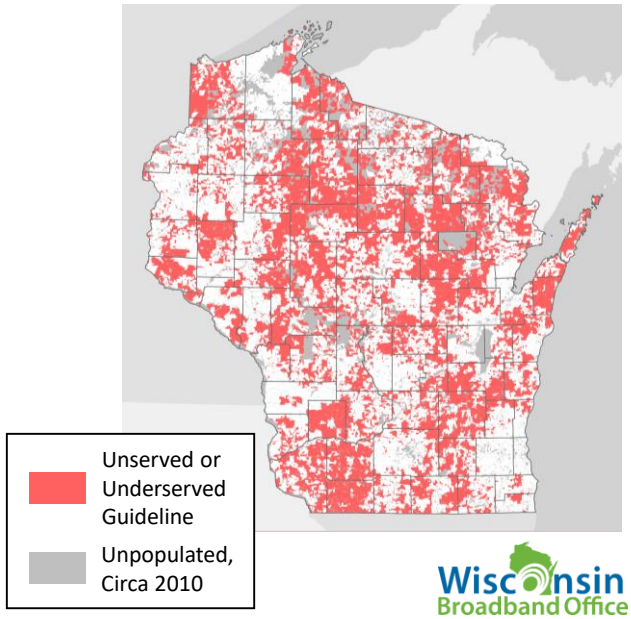
- Internet service providers, telecommunications utilities, cooperatives, local governments, and for-profit and non-profit organizations and others are eligible to apply for grants
- The project area proposed by the application must consist of unserved and underserved households or businesses. The Interim Rule defines unserved and underserved households or businesses as one or more households and businesses that are **not currently served by a wireline connection that reliably delivers at least 25 Mbps download speed and 3 Mbps of upload speed**
- The application must provide that, upon completion, the proposed service will reliably meet or exceed a symmetrical speed of 100 Mbps download and upload. In cases where the symmetrical 100/100 Mbps service is not practicable, the application may propose a service designed to reliably meet or exceed a 100 Mbps download speed and between 20 Mbps and 100 Mbps upload speed, but the proposed service must be scalable to a minimum of 100 download speed and 100 Mbps upload speed

Where may Broadband Grants be awarded?

For a project to be eligible for funding, it must serve “unserved or underserved” places.

“Unserved and underserved households or businesses means one or more households or businesses that are not currently served by a wireline connection that reliably delivers at least 25 Mbps download speed and 3 Mbps of upload speed."

- Interim Rule, § 35.3, 86 Fed. Reg. at 26821



“Is my location really reliably connected?”

The PSC's grant eligible guideline data only include places where no 25/3 wireline coverage is reported. With most coverage still being reported by census block, per FCC standards, eligible locations are underrepresented.

The grant application instructions provide:

- If the project area lies within a census block designated as served on the PSC Broadband Map, the applicant needs to provide additional documentation to demonstrate the actual broadband service, speed or reliability that is available in the proposed project area that would qualify the area as un/underserved.
- If service is available, but not reliable, please describe in detail, with concrete examples, how the network is unreliable.

"How to Map your Broadband Grant Project" Webinar

Tuesday, June 29th, 2:30-3:30 p.m.
Register & View at:
https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2316511986051431950

- Learn how to submit grant application mapping data
- Understand location-based grant eligibility
- Review grant mapping and planning resources, with Q & A

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Mapping Resources

"How to Map your Broadband Grant Project" Webinar recording will be on Grant webpage

To view Grant Eligibility Guidance layer:
https://maps.psc.wi.gov/apps/WisconsinBroadbandMap/

To view other grant-related maps, visit:
https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/BroadbandMaps.aspx

To download grant-related mapping layers and census block tables, visit:
https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/BroadbandData.aspx

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Application Contents & Scoring

Application Contents

- Page 1: Cover Sheet – must be signed
- Page 2 & 3: Summary of the Grant Application
- Page 4: Budget and Income Summary
- Page 5 plus: Project Map or Maps
- Remaining pages up to 30: Narrative
- Page 31 – 40: Attachments and supplemental materials that will be reviewed
- Page 40 – end: Additional supporting materials may not be reviewed

Narrative

USE THESE HEADINGS IN THIS ORDER

- Executive Summary
- Statement of applicant's ability to undertake the project
- Statement of need for high-speed, reliable and affordable broadband
- Project Proposal
  - Technology and network design
  - Affordability, digital literacy and internet access
- Partnership and community engagement
- Timeline
- Budget Discussion

Priority

Following the evaluation for eligibility for funding, applications will also be reviewed by the evaluation committee and ranked based on the Interim Rule priority items along with priority items used previously by the Commission.

- **Match (10 points):** An application will receive credit based on the percentage of matching funds the applicant proposes to invest in its project and the variety of sources of matching funding provided by others.
- **Project technology choice (10 points):** An application proposing to invest in fiber optic infrastructure will receive credit.
- **Last-mile connection (10 points):** An application proposing to invest in a physical broadband network that provides last-mile connections will receive credit.

Priority Continued

- **Applicant Type or Partnership (10 points):** An application proposing to build a broadband network owned, operated by, or affiliated with local governments, non-profits, and co-operatives will receive credit.
- **Service affordability (10 points):** An application that integrates one or more affordability options will receive credit.
- **No existing agreement to build a broadband service (10 points):** An application that demonstrates that there are no existing agreements or plans to build reliable wireline service with minimum speeds of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload within the project area by December 31, 2024, will receive credit.

Priority Continued

- **Existing broadband service need (10 points):** An application proposing to serve locations with the least access or slowest speed and the highest need will receive credit.
- **Internet access or digital literacy assistance (5 points):** An application proposing to provide internet access or digital literacy support to households facing negative economic impacts due to COVID-19 will receive credit.

Priority Continued

- **Applicant capacity and performance (15 points):** An application that demonstrates the financial, technical, and operational capacity and experience to successfully and completely execute the project in the timeframe will receive credit.

- **Technology Network and Budget (10 points):** An application that demonstrates a well-planned project with a reasonable budget that shows it will deliver speeds and service proposed and be sufficiently robust to meet increasing demand for bandwidth will receive credit.

Application Budget and Income Summary

Budget and Income Summary

- Template at https://psc.wi.gov > Programs > Wisconsin Broadband Office > Broadband Expansion Grants > ARPA Broadband Access Grant Budget and Income Summary Form
- Predetermined budget line categories
- Include as page 4 of application AND submit Excel version

Application narrative should explain land & building purchases, and include price estimations for equipment purchases

Budget Categories

- Contractual, Consultant Fees
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Labor (Salary, Fringe)
- Permitting, Licensing Fees
- Travel
- Other

Use the ARPA Budget Categories Reference Document

Allowable Expenses

- Allowable expenses incurred from March 3 through Date of Commission Order limited to:
  - Expenditures for materials, community planning and pre-engineering as long as they are used exclusively for the project
- **No** Inventory Expenses Incurred Prior to March 3, 2021
- **No** loaded labor rates or Fringe factors – only actual wages & actual fringe benefit costs are allowable

Categories Defined

- **CONTRACTUAL, CONSULTANT FEES**

  All project expenses for work performed by a third-party contractor. A third-party contractor is any entity that is not a signatory to the grant agreement or is not an ISP/Telco. Examples: legal services, cement contractors, tree trimmers, electrician and engineering services.

  Any materials supplied by a third-party contractor should be included here.

Categories Defined

- **EQUIPMENT**
  Items with an acquisition cost greater than $5,000. This includes the cost of the asset as well as costs to ready the asset for its intended use. The equipment must have a useful life of more than one year. Expenses furnished by a third-party contractor, including materials furnished by the contractor, should never be included in this category.
- **SUPPLIES**
  Items with an acquisition cost of $5,000 or less or a useful life expectancy of less than one year. Supplies are generally consumed during the project performance period.

Categories Defined

- **LABOR (SALARY, FRINGE)**
  Actual labor expenses, including fringe benefits, of the grant manager and any ISP/Telco, even if the ISP/Telco is not the owner of the infrastructure.

  This category is limited to direct personnel expenses only.

- **PERMITTING, LICENSING FEES**
  All permitting & licensing expenses.

Categories Defined

- **TRAVEL**
  Grantee's travel expenses related to the project, including travel expenses of an ISP/Telco regardless of whether the ISP/Telco is or isn't the owner of the infrastructure.
- **OTHER**
  Expenses associated with integrating affordability options into program design. Expenses associated with increasing internet access or digital literacy to households that experienced a negative economic impact from the pandemic, regardless of whether the above categories might also describe such expenses.

BUDGET & INCOME SUMMARY

Grant Summary

Grant Applicant:	Project:	
Requested Grant Funds:	Match Provided:	Match % Requested:

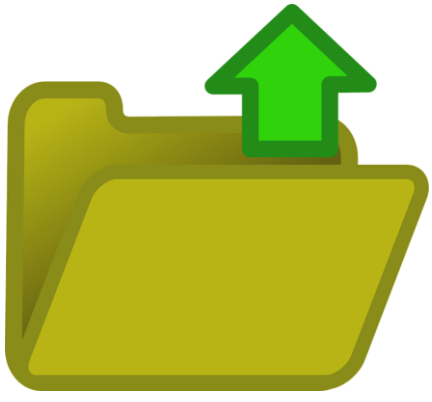
Budget [1]

Line:	Description / Category:	Total Cost:	Grant Funds:	Match:
1	Contractual, Consultant Fees		$ -	$ -
2	Equipment		$ -	$ -
3	Supplies		$ -	$ -
4	Labor (Salary, Fringe)		$ -	$ -
5	Permitting, Licensing Fees		$ -	$ -
6	Travel		$ -	$ -
7	Other		$ -	$ -
	Total:	$ -	$ -	$ -

Do not include the value of in-kind contributions in the above budget or in the 'Match Provided' field in the Grant Summary section. The total of Grant Funds should match the 'Requested Grant Funds' above, and the total Match in this Budget section should match the number entered in the 'Match Provided' field above.

Pledged Contributions				
#:	Entity:	Entity Type:	Pledge Type:	Pledge:
1		Partner	Cash	
2		Other	In-Kind	
3		Applicant	Salary	
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
			Total:	$ -

Submitting Your Application

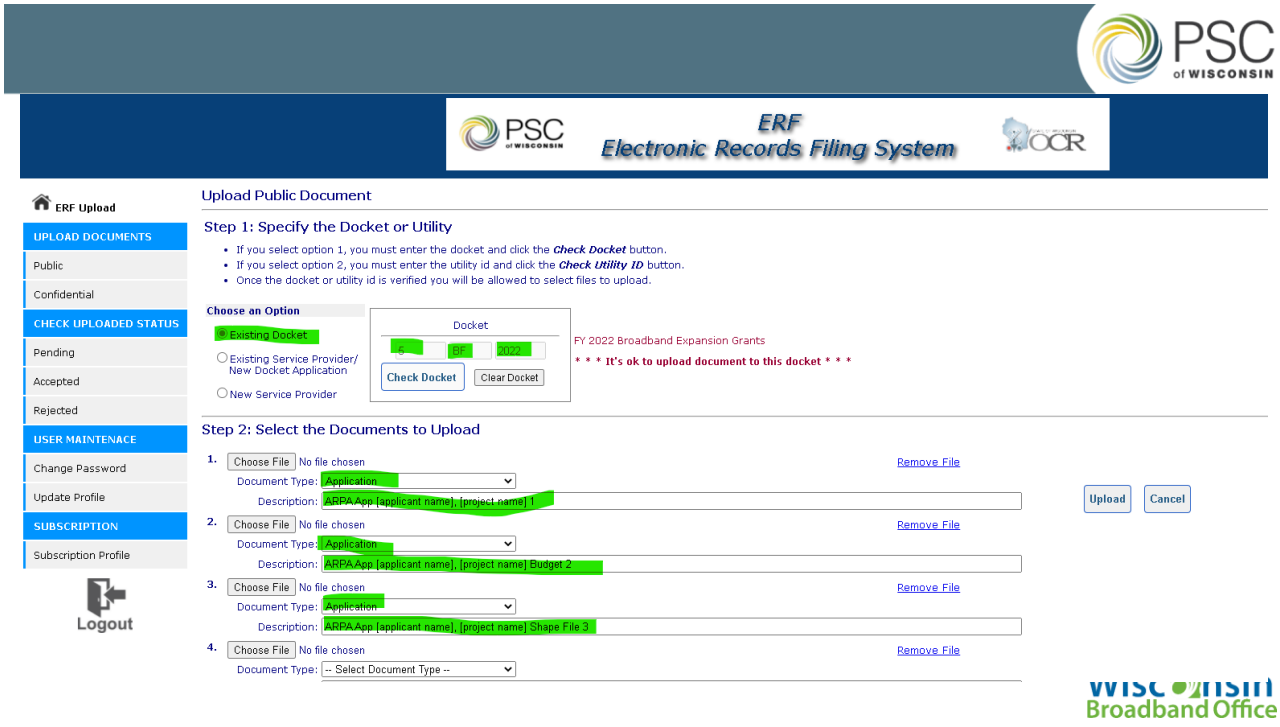


Electronic Records Filing System (ERF)

- Save documents to be uploaded to your desktop
  - Path and filename cannot exceed 255 characters
  - 20MB limit per file; 10 files per upload
  - Upload your PDF'd application plus your spreadsheet & any map files
- Upload, go to https://PSC.wi.gov > E-Services > ERF Upload Documents
  - First time filers must establish a user account – Individual is recommended
  - Returning users can retrieve Username and Password
  - Must always log on to upload

More ERF Tips

- Refer to Section 2.0 of the Application for details
  - Existing Docket 5-BF-2022
  - Document Type is *Application* (for all – PDF and spreadsheet)
  - Description
    - ARPA App [insert name], [insert project]
    - Identify parts (numerical or alphabetic sequencing) at end of description



More ERF Tips

- Deadline for uploading assistance is 4pm, Monday, July 26
  - Contact is alyssa.kenney@wisconsin.gov
- Deadline to upload applications is 4pm, Tuesday, July 27
- Documents are date/time-stamped upon upload in ERF

Do NOT wait until the last minute to ERF!

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Questions, Contacts, Docket & Other Important Dates

- In the case of ambiguity, error, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other deficiency in the Application, contact alyssa.kenney@Wisconsin.gov
  - Deadline is 4pm, July 13, 2021
- For general questions, contact PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov
- For all spatial file mapping questions, contact PSCBroadbandData@Wisconsin.gov
- The ARPA Broadband Access Grant will use the docket 5-BF-2022
  - Use the ERF – EZ Subscription https://apps.psc.wi.gov/ERF/ERF/ERFhome.aspx

Conclusion

- Make sure your application is eligible
  - Not currently served by a wireline connection that reliably delivers at least 25 Mbps download speed and 3 Mbps of upload speed
  - 100/100 or 100/20 to 100/100
- Address the priority factors
- Follow the instructions, answer the questions completely
- Tell your story
- Curate the comments
- Data and people matter
- ERF Remember to log on & don't wait until the last minute to familiarize and upload